EQUITY

COMMUNICATIONS

GUIDELINES FOR ACHIEVING EQUITY IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Equal Employment Opportunity

THE CITY OF CALGARY

STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

93-01347/

THE CITY OF CALGARY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Equal Employment Opportunity Division
1992 July

COMMUNICATION REFLECTS WHO YOU ARE

The City of Calgary is committed to reflecting the diversity of the community in its work force. This commitment is taking form through the Corporation's employment Equity program.

It is important that our communications reflect this commitment because our communications form much of the basis for the evaluation of who we are. We are a diverse and inclusionary employer and our communications should reflect this.

EQUITY COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

**To include the diversity of the community in our verbal, written and visual communications*

**To avoid language or visual images that place undue emphasis on gender or cultural background*

**To avoid potentially discriminatory references to gender or culture*

**To strive toward communications that treat people equally*

**To avoid any stereotypic references that may be offensive*

**To use these guidelines in all communications including conversation, formal written or verbal communication and visual presentations*

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The gender of an individual should not be identified unless it is relevant to the matter at hand. For example, it is irrelevant whether travellers on Calgary Transit are male or female. The use of gender-specific language is appropriate only when referring to a specific individual.

Avoid making generalizations about the roles, interests, concerns or abilities of women.

AVOID	TRY
Calling women secondary earners or men "bread winners".	Leave out these references. They assume women depend on another source of income. They devalue the role of women in the work force.
Depicting women as pretty, social and one-dimensional. Referring to women as decorations.	Show women of different ages, body types, hair and skin colour in a way that honestly reflects their variety of roles.

Treat men and women with the same dignity, respect and seriousness. Avoid portraying women as possessions or dependents. They should be recognized in their own right for their own achievements.

AVOID	TRY
Statements such as "Jim Brown is a competent manager and his wife is that brunette in auditing".	Jim and Joan Brown are highly regarded in their respective fields. She is a successful auditor and he is a competent personnel manager.
"Mr. Smith allows his secretary to attend meetings."	Ms. Jones represents her unit at meetings.
A story on a woman who, as a manager, somehow keeps up with shopping, cooking, and cleaning house.	Keep the story job-related. Imagine showing a man in this light.

Avoid using words and job titles that apply to one gender. No job or role should be defined as specifically male or female.

AVOID	TRY
chairman/chairwoman	chair, chairperson, moderator, presiding officer, executive officer, facilitator, coordinator
businessman/woman	business executive, business person/people, manager, entrepreneur
manageress	manager
draftsman	draftsperson
housewife	homemaker
lady lawyer, male nurse	lawyer, nurse
landlord/lady	owner
policeman, fireman, garbageman	police officer, firefighter, garbage collector
spokesman	spokesperson, advocate, representative, speaking on behalf of ...
cameraman	camera technician, camera operator
lineman	line technician, line maintenance worker
cleaning lady	office cleaner, housekeeper
delivery boy	courier, messenger
maintenance man, repairman	maintenance worker or specify the skill, ie. carpenter

Refer to a woman by name in the same way as you refer to a man. Both should be called by full names, by first or last names only or by title. Call women Ms., Mrs., or Miss, according to their preference.

AVOID	TRY
John Jones and Miss Smith	John Jones and Mary Smith
Mr. Jones and Mary	Jones and Smith or John and Mary
Miss Smith and John	Ms. Smith and Mr. Jones

If you are not sure what title a woman prefers, you may greet her by her first and last names. For example, "Dear Mary Smith".

Use greetings that can apply to both sexes if you don't know whether your reader is male or female. "Dear" followed by the initials and family name is acceptable in this case. For example, "Dear M.A. Smith".

Use a title or drop the greeting when both sex and name are unknown. For example, "Dear Manager", "Dear Member" or "Dear Reader". Try to avoid using "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Madam/Sir".

AVOID	TRY
TO: Miss Wanda Blair FROM: Mr. A. Wilson	TO: Wanda Blair FROM: Albert Wilson or TO: W. Blair FROM: A. Wilson
Dear Miss Brown	Dear Hilary Brown
Dear Mrs. Brown	Dear Ms. Brown
Ms.	(unless otherwise directed to use Miss Brown or Mrs. Brown)
In a letter to an individual, the following are acceptable if:	
(a)gender is unknown	Dear H.L. Brown Dear Mr./Ms. Brown
(b)name is unknown	Dear Editor
(c)directed to a professional	Dear Dr./Professor/Judge/ Trustee (followed by Surname) Dear Sir/Madam

A safe alternative would be to use the person's signature as a clue to how the person wishes to be addressed. Some examples are provided below:

SIGNATURE	SALUTATION
Pat Bulmer (Mrs.)	Mrs. P. Bulmer Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear Mrs. Bulmer:**
Pat Bulmer (Ms.)	Ms. P. Bulmer Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear Ms. Bulmer:**
Pat Bulmer (Miss) Principal	Miss P. Bulmer Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear Miss Bulmer:**
Patrick Bulmer Principal	Patrick Bulmer, Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear Mr. Bulmer:**
P. Bulmer Principal	P. Bulmer, Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear P. Bulmer:**
Unreadable	Principal Pineview School 804 Lakeside Dr. Calgary, Alberta **Dear Sir/Madam:**

Use similar words and phrases when referring to the sexes. Avoid stereotyping women by roles or condescending to them. For example, women should be referred to as ladies only when men are referred to as gentlemen.

AVOID	TRY
men and ladies (or girls)	men and women
man and wife	husband and wife
The Mayor and Janet Jones	The Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Stay away from "man" words. General references should use general terms that include all people.

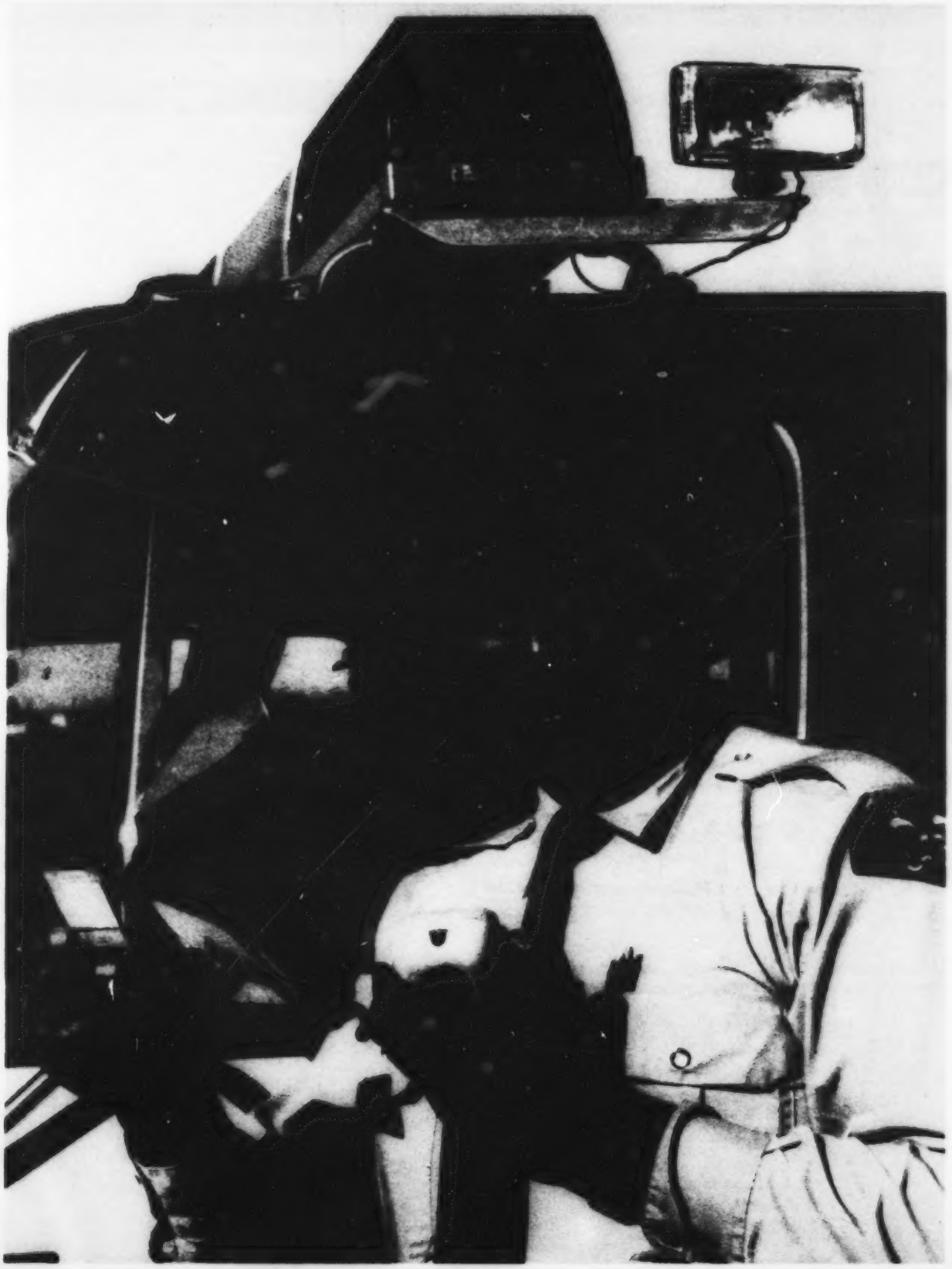
AVOID	TRY
mankind	people, humanity, human race
middleman	go-between, liaison/agent
manpower	human resources, labour force, personnel
man-made	synthetic, manufactured, artificially constructed
spokesman	representative, spokesperson
layman	layperson
man-year	person-year, staff-year
manning	hosting, staffing
best man for the job	best person (candidate) for the job
man-hours	staff-hours

Avoid using pronouns limited to one sex. Use the plural, "a" or "the", "he or she", or "she or he". You can change the sentence structure to avoid the problem.

AVOID	TRY
The average employee does banking close to his office.	The average employee uses a bank close to the office. Most employees use a bank close to their office.
Each manager should ensure her staff is ...	Each manager should ensure his or her staff is ... Managers should ensure their staff are ...
A job hunter may find work on his own.	A job hunter may find work independently.

Avoid using words that belittle, stereotype or condescend. Don't make it seem that women's participation is unusual.

AVOID	TRY
career girl/woman	This says that most women don't have careers. A girl is a female child. Make sure your reference is gender appropriate by substituting "man" for "boy" or "woman" for "girl".
executive woman	manager, executive, member of the business community, or name the profession
working mothers	mothers who do paid work outside the home
working fathers	fathers who do paid work outside the home
working wives	married women in paid employment
working husbands	married men in paid employment



"Aboriginal" is a term that is used to refer to Native (treaty, status and non-status Indians), Metis and Inuit people and is acceptable to all groups. Never use colloquial terms when referring to aboriginal people. Check for biases and value judgements. Sometimes they reinforce misunderstandings and inaccurate stereotypes of aboriginal people, for example, showing them to be war-like. Recent research has shown that many assumptions made about the traditions, achievements and contributions of aboriginal people were and are wrong.

In situations where the race of an individual is irrelevant to the matter at hand, the use of words which indicate race is not appropriate.

Aboriginal people is acceptable when a statement holds true for all groups regardless of legal or political distinctions. However there are many diverse Indian cultures in Alberta. Be aware of the differences among aboriginal people, historically, culturally and politically.

Be aware of language that carries negative racial or cultural meanings. For example, "culturally deprived" or "culturally disadvantaged".

AVOID	TRY
Native or Indian to refer to all groups. The terms "Natives" or "Indians" are generally accepted as referring only to Native (treaty, status and non-status) aboriginals. Metis and Inuit are excluded.	Aboriginal people

AVOID	TRY
The City's program assists culturally disadvantaged youth of aboriginal origin.	The City's program assists youth of aboriginal origin.

RACT FOR THE C
LE DRY POND

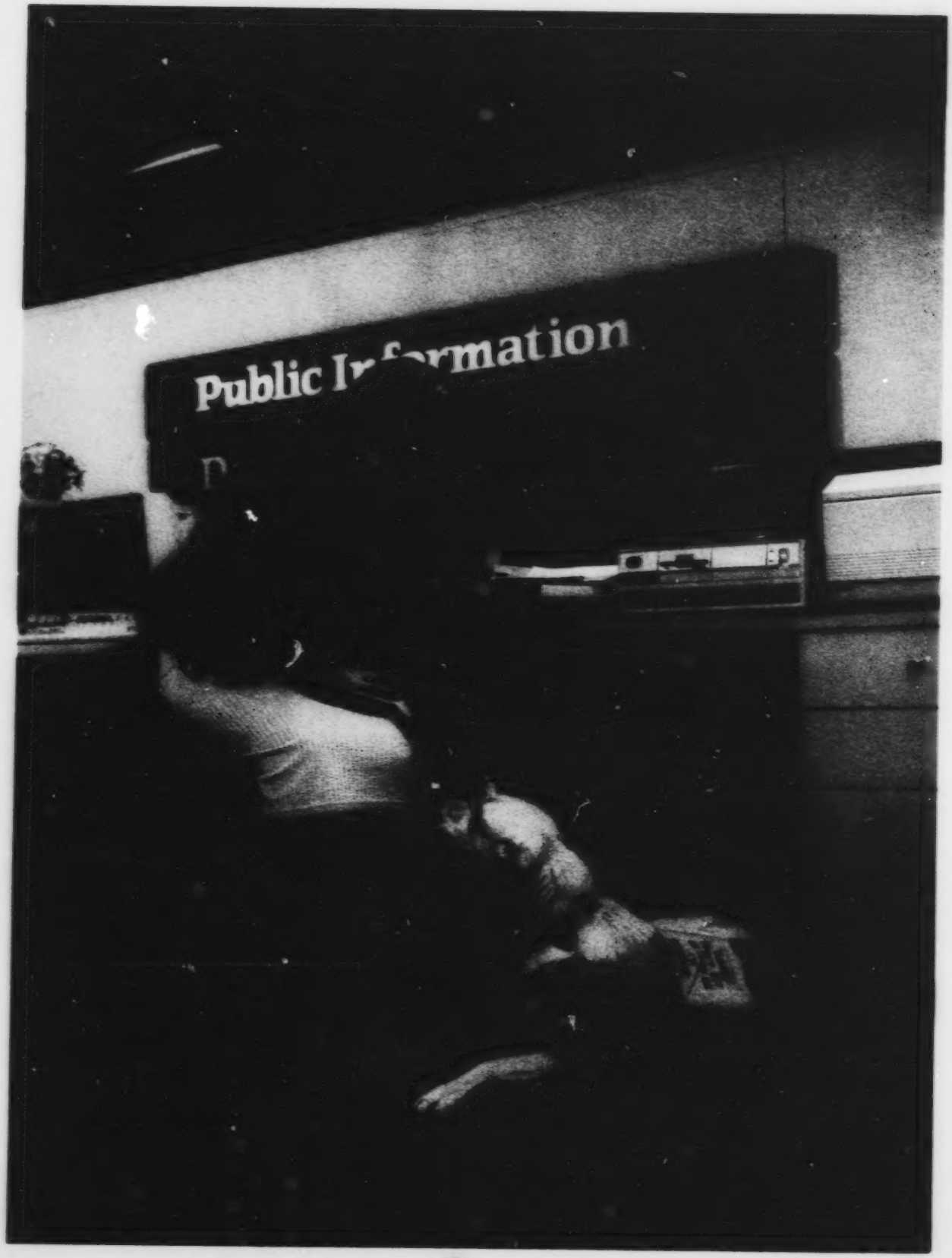
Avoid the use of colloquial terms when referring to visible minority people. Avoid using qualifiers or adjectives that reinforce racial or cultural stereotypes.

In situations where the race of an individual is irrelevant to the matter at hand, the use of words which indicate race is not appropriate.

AVOID	TRY
coloured person, negro	Black person
Indian (East)	South Asian, East Indian or identify specific nationality, eg. Pakistani
Chinamen	people who are Chinese, people who are from China
Arabs	be specific, identify the nationality, eg. persons from Iraq.
Non Whites	People of colour, women of colour

Watch for inaccurate cultural information. Check for biases and value judgements. Sometimes they reinforce misunderstandings and inaccurate stereotypes.

Be aware of differences among visible minority persons. Remember the different ways people identify themselves. Over-using umbrella words like "visible minorities" implies that they are the same culturally, historically and politically. That message is wrong.


Public I

Stress ability rather than disability. If a disability isn't relevant, don't mention it.

In general, avoid the use of colloquial terms or any term which could be interpreted as diminishing the worth of the individual with the condition.

AVOID	TRY
The deaf accountant spotted the error.	The accountant spotted the error.
He does a fine job, for a blind man.	He does a fine job.
Article on a blind person who performs a job usually done by sighted people.	Article on a technological aid that assists an employee with a visual impairment.

Don't take on a condescending or patronising tone in articles or stories about people with disabilities. Making those who succeed "super human" says that people with disabilities usually have no outstanding talents.

AVOID	TRY
Mary has such courage. Isn't it amazing how she manages to do a good job even though she's handicapped.	Mary does a good job.

Remember that handicap and disability don't mean the same thing. A disability is a specific impairment that causes a lack of function, eg. visual impairment. A handicap is a disadvantage that results from an impairment, eg. lack of employment and no access to buildings.

Handicap is often used to mean disability. This practice is becoming less acceptable. (One origin of the word handicap implies begging - the phrase "cap in hand").

Refer to the person first, not the person's disability. Avoid using adjectives as nouns.

AVOID	TRY
the disabled the handicapped disabled people	people with disabilities or persons with disabilities
the blind	people with visual impairments
the deaf	people with hearing impairments
	people who are hard of hearing
the retarded	people with mental disabilities
	people with development disabilities
an epileptic	person who has epilepsy
MS person	person who has multiple sclerosis
stutterer	person with a speech impairment

Avoid using emotional words and phrases. They often show people with disabilities as needing to be cared for or pitied.

AVOID	TRY
the less fortunate	people with disabilities
wheelchair victim wheelchair patient wheelchair case	uses a wheelchair or wheelchair user
victim of a mental illness	person with a mental illness
patient in a group home	person who lives in a group home
birth defect	congenital disability, blind from birth, deaf from birth
brain-damaged	brain-injured
blind as a bat	has a visual disability, or limited or partial vision, or total or severe loss of vision
disease	because many disabilities are not caused by disease, leave out the word if you aren't referring to an actual disease

Stay away from words and phrases that limit the capabilities of people with disabilities.

AVOID	TRY
coping with a disability	has a disability
confined to a wheelchair wheelchair bound	uses a wheelchair
crippled, invalid, lame	disabled, or be more specific about the disability (walks with a crutch or leg braces)
crazy, insane	mentally ill
physically challenged	person with a physical disability
mentally retarded	person with a mental disability developmentally disabled person
deaf and dumb	hearing disability or impairment, unable to hear, unable to speak, partial or total hearing loss

Be careful with words and phrases that set people with disabilities apart from others

AVOID	TRY
we, they those people	make less of differences
healthy or normal vs. disabled	able-bodied, able to walk, see, etc., people who aren't disabled
special needs	use sparingly

In order to address members of an audience equally, speakers should ensure that their remarks do not demean, exclude, or stereotype members of either gender or any group.

Inclusionary language should be used throughout a speech. Content should be balanced by references, examples and anecdotes which can be understood to include all elements of our workforce and society. Stories and jokes which could be perceived as sexist, racist, exclusionary or prejudiced are to be avoided and appropriate language (see previous sections) used at all times.

Opening forms of address which include all members of the audience should be used. Examples include:

Good afternoon, everyone

Colleagues

Colleagues and friends

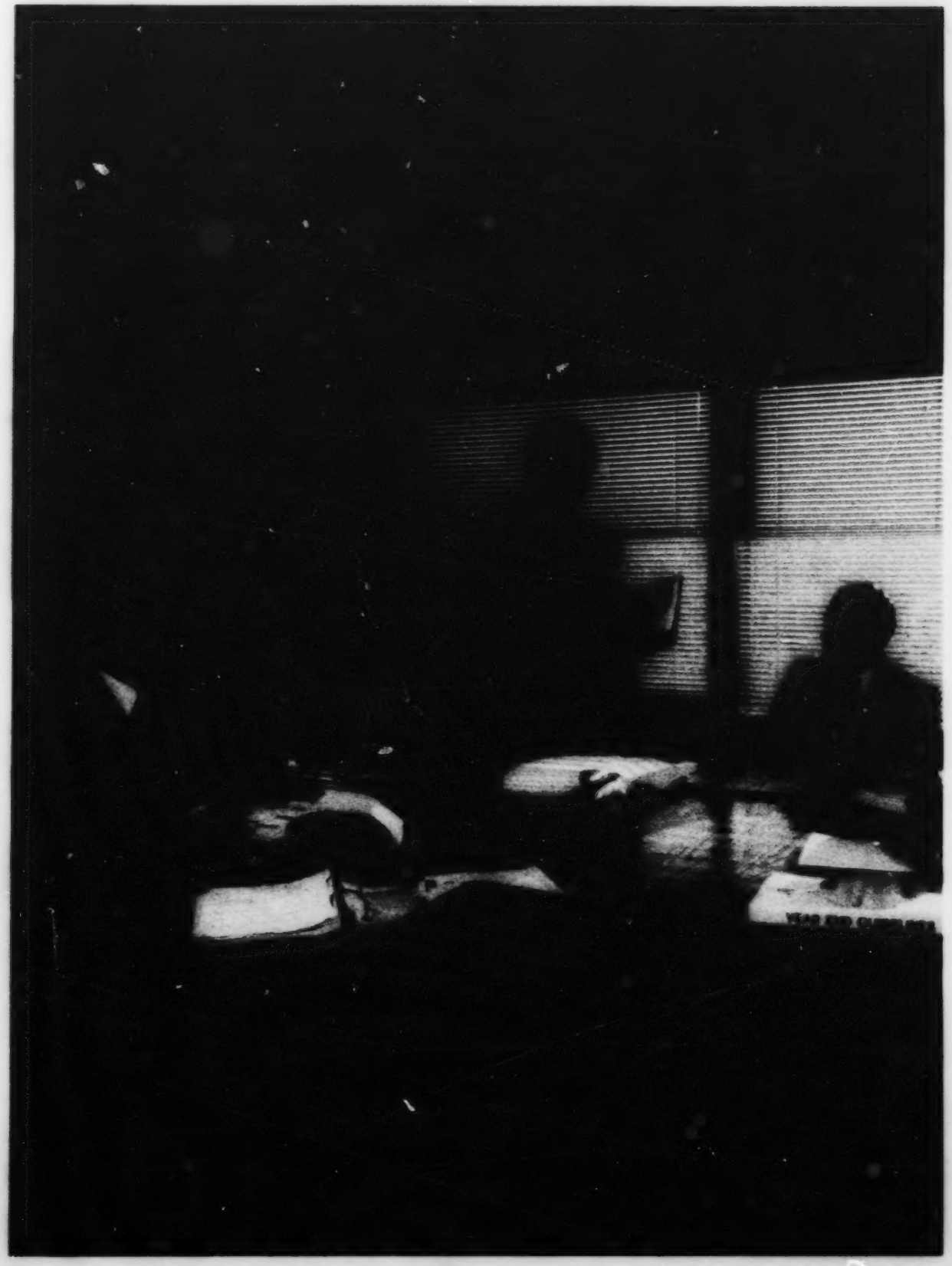
Friends and Associates

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen

The singling out of one gender, aboriginal people, visible minority people or persons with disabilities in a speech is not appropriate unless the reference is directly relevant to the matter under discussion.

For example, references to aboriginal people and visible minority people could be appropriate when discussing the delivery of recreational services in a community where these groups are a large portion of the population. However, they would not be relevant in a discussion of transit planning for the same community since a seat on a bus is the same regardless of the gender or racial origin of its potential occupant.

For another example, references to the needs of persons with physical disabilities could be relevant to a discussion on the design of facilities and equipment, while the gender or racial origin of the users would be irrelevant.



Equity communications also relates to visual materials (videos, posters, photographs) or audio materials (scripts or presentations).

VISUAL MATERIAL

Fair representation of all groups is essential. Check illustrations and graphics. Make sure no biases or stereotypes appear. Avoid cliches. Be careful with cartoons and animation. Humour that is based on stereotypes should be avoided.

GENDER REPRESENTATION

Women should be represented in presentation materials and shown in occupations other than those which are traditionally female such as secretary or clerk. Similarly, men should be shown in roles such as caregivers for children or elderly family members, as elementary school teachers and in non-traditional job roles for males. Attempts should be made to present women:

- as active participants in all aspects of life;
- in non-traditional occupations such as engineers, pilots, plumbers, bridge builders, computer operators, TV repairers among others; men should be shown as nurses, grade-school teachers, secretaries, typists, switchboard operators;
- in positions of authority at all levels over men and women within any organization;
- as having achieved success in all fields of endeavour (e.g. women in all occupations, sports, arts and science). Perhaps the most obvious reinforcement of discriminatory sex-roles is the treatment of women as pretty, sociable and shallow.

  Avoid using women as visual decorations;
- in pictures as often as men. A numerical and role balance which reflects reality should be achieved (e.g. if three doctors are shown, one or two should be female).

Ensure that the physical placement and posture of men and women in pictures shows both genders in authority roles (e.g. females can be shown giving directions to a male subordinates).

Wherever possible, include works by and about women in any exhibition, display or visual presentation.

REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, MEMBERS OF VISIBLE MINORITY GROUPS, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In general, the guidelines for visual representation of women apply to all groups. Efforts should be made to include visible minority, aboriginal, and persons with disabilities in visual/ pictorial materials, whether illustrating employees, or members of the public. This encourages a more balanced representation of our multi-dimensional society versus the stereotype often pictured in mainstream media which often does not reflect peoples' real lives and experiences.

It is appropriate when including aboriginal people or members of a visible minority in a video or pictorial presentation to choose members of the group who are recognizably aboriginal or a member of a particular visible minority group. Except for Heritage Days or other special celebrations, it is not appropriate to depict aboriginals or visible minority persons in traditional cultural costumes, unless customarily worn in the workplace. Braids, saris and turbans are often customary in the workplace.

Downplay distinctions. Show people from all groups taking part in a variety of activities alongside other members of society.

SCRIPT/DIALOGUE REPRESENTATION

Spoken scripts and dialogues should conform to the guidelines for written material. In addition:

- Women, aboriginal people, members of visible minority groups, and persons with disabilities should have fair representation in positions of authority and opportunity e.g. as interviewers and as subjects of interviews.
- Female voices should be used as often as male voices in voice-overs for audio-visual materials, regardless of subject matter.
- When referring to women, when women are speaking, or when women are doing voice-overs, avoid using dialogue which could be interpreted as trivializing womens' roles.
- Avoid jokes at someone else's expense. A great deal of humour depends on reinforcing stereotypes.
- Include members of these four groups as leaders and speakers at workshops, training events and conferences when possible and appropriate.
- Consider the use of audio tapes, Braille, sign language or captions when preparing communications. Check meeting places, training facilities and conference sites to be sure they are accessible to people with disabilities.

The following publications were used in the development of Guidelines for Achieving Equity in Corporate Communications.

Guidelines for Non-Sexist Communications, Ontario Ministry of Education, Human Resources Branch, Employment Equity Unit, December 1989.

A Way With Words, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, Status of the Disabled Persons Secretariat, 1990

Words with Dignity, Government of Canada, Fitness & Amateur Sport.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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